

TO THE
PARLIAMENT
OF THE
Common-wealth
OF
ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & IRELAND.

THE
CASE
AND
PROCEEDINGS
OF

At least 60 Gentlemen, Participants and Purchasers for valuable consideration of Lands, in the Levell of *Hatfield Chase*, the Counties of *York, Lincoln, and Nottingham,*

AND

More then 200 of their Tenants who have been despoiled of their Estates by the inhumane and barbarous Riots of the Inhabitants of the Mannor of *Epworth*, whereof some have been murthered, others wounded, the Church with their Houses demolished, and the materials thereof, with their Goods taken from them by force ;
For which cause they the said Rioters were exempted in the last Act of Generall Pardon.

Humbly presented to the consideration of this present Parliament for Redress and Reparation of their so great Losses and Damages,
As it was also to the Parliament then sitting in *January 1651.*

Printed in the Year, 1654.

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To the Supream Authority of this Nation, the
PARLIAMENT of the Common-wealth of
England, Scotland, and Ireland,

The humble Petition of the Participants in the Drain-
nage of the Levell of Hatfield-Chase in the Coun-
ties of York, Lincoln, and Nottingham,

Sheweth,

That the Petitioners and those under whom they claim, did about
24. years since at the Expence of near 200000^{lb} drain and lay
dry 60000 Acres of ground in the said Levell then drowned,
and of small value, and made the same worth 10^s, 12^s, and some
16^s per Acre; And as a recompence for their said charge,
hazard and travell in so publike a work, the proportion of
24500 Acres of the said Lands, whereof 7400 Acres of the
Wastes of the Mannor of Epworth was part, was settled upon
them by good Assurances in the Law, as will appear to your Honours upon the Exami-
nation thereof, and are too long here to insert; And according to the said Assurances,
the Petitioners had quiet and peaceable possession of the said Lands, and so enjoyed the
same for many years, and divided, improved, and planted the same, and in particular
upon the 7400 Acres of Epworth, built a Church and 160 Habitations, and have
constantly paid the Rent of 1228^{lb} per annum, which was then reserved upon the said
whole proportion, and now payable to the State for ever,

That in 1642. in time of the Warre, some of the Inhabitants of the Mannor of Ep-
worth by the instigation of one Daniel Noddell an Attorney at Law, did rise in tu-
mults, and laid waste 4000 Acres, part of the said 7400. demolished the buildings,
and destroyed the crops of Corn and Rapeseed growing thereupon; For redress whereof,
and establishing their possession, the Petitioners exhibited their Bill into the Court of
Exchequer, who granted severall Injunctions, and made severall Orders to the Sheriff
for quieting the possession; but the tumults growing too great to be suppressed by the or-
dinary Courts of Justice, the Petitioners had recourse unto the Parliament, who were
pleased to make severall Orders therein for relieving the Petitioners, which likewise were
contemned, and the said Petitioners by force still kept out of possession of the said 4000
Acres.

That the said Rioters seeing themselves go unpunished for their former insolencies
and Rebellions against the Law and Government of this State, and having now got
the countenance of Lieutenant Colonel John Lilburn and Major Wildman, did in
Octo. 1650. whilst the Cause was hearing in the Exchequer, rise in tumults, and
destroy the Corn and Crops growing upon the other 3400 Acres, residue of the said
7400 Acres, whereof the Court being informed, granted a Writ of Assistance to the
Sheriff to quiet the possession, who comes upon the place, and is there resisted, and in his
presence the Fences thrown down.

In Hilary Term 1650. the Court upon full hearing decreed and established the pos-
session with these Petitioners, which Decree coming to be published upon the place, ha-
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ving now the influence of Mr Lilburn, with high and reproachfull language condemn it, and being advised to give obedience, or else the Parliament must be acquainted with it, they answer, that it was a Traiterous Order, and that they would obey neither Barons nor Parliament, and that they could make as good a Parliament themselves, and that if the Parliament sent forces against them, they would raise Forces and resist them, and then proceed to demolish all the Houses of the Town of Santoft, with a Windmill, and deface the Church, all built by your Petitioners and their Tenants: Then your Petitioners apply themselves to the Councel of State, who were pleased to send an Order to the Sheriff of the County of Lincoln on the Petitioners behalf: But during these transactions the Rioters, in contempt of Authority and Law, break the Houses, fetch away the Tenants Cattle by force, and impound them, and would admit of no Replevin, but forced them to redeem them at what rate they pleased, and proceed to demolish both Houses, Barns, and all other Buildings, and destroy the Corn, and fetch away the materials of those buildings by force, to the damage of your Petitioners and their Tenants in the whole at least 40000^{lb} besides the damage to the Common-wealth in generall by destruction of so many habitations and ploughs for Tillage and Husbandry.

The whole proportion of 7400 Acres within this Mannor being thus laid waste, the said Lilburn, Wildman, and Noddell with divers of the Rioters ride and view it, then they make agreement with divers of the most notorious Rioters, that for 2000 Acres of that Land to be given to them where they would make Election, and 200 to Noddell, they would defend them against all Fines and other troubles concerning the Riots before-mentioned, and defend them against these Petitioners for the other 5200 Acres, and presently after this they take the same 2200 Acres into their possession, worth at least 2600 per annum, and so made at the charge of the Petitioners, and have contracted to let proportions thereof: and have entred upon one house, and reedified the same, and keep possession thereof, and on the nineteenth day of October last (being the Lords Day) Lilburn came with a great number armed to the Church, and there forced away the Minister and Congregation, saying, he should not preach there unlesse they were stronger then he, and now makes it a place to lay his Hay, and a Slaughter-house to kill Cattel, and during his abode in the Countrey practised with the Inhabitants of other Mannors to do the like as Epworth had done, saying, that Decrees were illegal, and to make the present Government odious, speaks high, reproachfull, and seditious language against the Parliament and present Government, as will particularly appear upon Examination,

The Petitioners most humbly beseech your Honours to take into your Consideration,

1. The great disobedience to the Parliament and Courts of Justice, and Contempt of the present Government.
2. The great damage to the Common-wealth in generall, and in particular to your Petitioners and their Tenants, to the value of at least 40000^{lb}.
3. The consequences of such unparallel'd and rebellious Riots, and to direct such a way for the Petitioners Reparation, and Damages, and future Preservation of this Levell, as to your grave wisdom shall be thought meet.

And your Petitioners shall pray, &c.

This was referred the 10. of January 1651. to a Committee of the then Parliament, who upon Examination made the Report following, viz.



THE REPORT OF THE Committee OF PARLIAMENT.

BY vertue of an Order of Parliament of the 10th of *January* 1651. we have taken into Consideration the Petition of the Participants in the Drainage of the Levell of *Hatfield Chace*, and upon Examination of severall Witnesses upon Oath, We finde

That the Petitioners at the Expence of 175046^{lb} or thereabouts, did Drain and lay Dry about 60000 Acres of Land, lying contiguous within the Counties of *York Lincoln* and *Nottingham*, which Land was not worth before 3 shillings 4 pence per Acre, and made the same worth 10 shillings, 12 shillings, 16 shillings, and some 20 shillings per Acre.

That in *June* 1642. your Petitioners had been in a quiet possession by the space of 10 years, of about 7400 Acres of that Land lying within the Mannor of *Epworth*.

That in 1642. *John Allen, John Crosse, Leonard Cowling, William Spaven, Thomas Noble, James Stokeham, Edward Baffendalt, Thomas Meggot, Edward Wyldbore, Edward Earle* and *William Wake, Robert Fawkesworth, Thomas Thomkinson, John Wilson, William Carryer, Robert Snell, John Garland* and divers others, in a Tumultuous manner came into the Levell within the Mannor of *Epworth*, and there brake down the Fences, and put in their Cattle, and destroyed about 160 Acres of growing Corn and Rapes, and then divers of the inhabitants of *Faxe* came in amongst them and continued Rioting from day to day till they had laid waft about 4000 Acres of the Drained Land, and pulled down severall houses thereon standing.

That about that time Captain *Kingman* (since dead) with divers others of the Mannor of *Epworth*, pull'd up a Navigable Saffs planted in *Vickerdicke*, which cost the replanting 1500^{lb} at the least.

That shortly after *Thomas Peacocke, Thomas Burton* and divers others, severall daies during the flowing of the Spring-Tides, forced open a Sewer called *Snow Sewer*, planted upon the River of *Trent* for venting the waters out of the Levell, and during the ebb shut down the inner doors whereby the waters could not get out; this course they used till they had drowned about 8000 Acres of Corn and Rapes then growing, and the Corn stacks generally half way, with most of the habitations by the space of Ten weeks.

That the Tenants thus expelled from their habitations complained to the Committee of *Lincoln*, who gave them an Order to open the Sluce and let out the waters, which Order being brought, the said *Peacocke, Burton* and others, with Muskets defended the Sluce and refused to give obedience.

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That

That in the year 1647. upon the Bill depending in the Exchequer, exhibited by the Petitioners against the Inhabitants, severall Orders were made for the establishing the possession with the Petitioners, and Order given to the Sheriff to assist them, and then Daniell Noddell an Attorney at Law, Thomas Taukersby, Robert Browne, Thomas Hill of Epworth, and Richard Jarvis of Omston, with divers others, to the number of 400 persons came upon the place Armed with Swords and Muskets to resist, whereby those Orders were fruitless.

That the Petitioners being still kept out of their Possession, brought their Bill to hearing; then the said Daniell Noddell the Solicitor for these Inhabitants got in to his assistance Lieutenant Col. John Lilburn and Major John Wildman, and while the Cause was hearing the Inhabitants began to Riot on 3400 Acres which was yet kept up.

That upon Complaint thereof to the Court of Exchequer, they sent an Injunction and a Writ of Assistance to the Sheriff to quiet the Possession till the hearing of the Cause, but in his presence the Fences are thrown down by multitudes, and the Riotors by force fetch away the Tenants Cattle and Impound them, and refuse to admit replevins, and force them to Redeem them at what Rate they please.

That the persons Acting in these last Riots on the 3400 Acres, were Thomas Hill of Epworth, Robert Johnson, Alexander Fox, John Watson junior, Thomas Glew, John Johnson, Richard Maw Constable, Richard Procter, Thomas Hallifax, William Elmer, John Artus, Jehosephat Tayler, John Granger, Peter Clerke of Belton, William Robinson, Thomas Bernard, George Peacocke, Jeffery Whitaker of Epworth, William Whash of Belton, John Brocke, Samuel Clayton, William Popplewell junior, Ralph Wray, Alexander Fletcher, Charles Laund, Robert Young, Robert Pycocke, William Pycocke, Robert Chesman, Alexander Pitts, John Foster, John Pettyner, Matthew Dale, John Robson, William Parkinson, Thomas Granger, John Halifax, Charles Teate, Edward Hallifax, William Swindall, Henry Cleire, Richard Rose, William Thompson, Robert Teale, Richard Bernard, Thomas Clearke, Thomas Tayer, Matthew Hallifax, Thomas Davis senior, John Davis junior, Peter Bernard High-Constable, John Bernard all of Belton, William Whiteacre senior, William Whiteacre junior, Thomas Browne, Alexander Mawsonne of John Maw, John Clearke, Alexander Clearke senior, John Loughton, Thomas Coggan sonne of George, George Chapman, Alexander Clearke junior, John West, George Cutforth, Alexander Cutforth, Alexander Chapman, Thomas Loughton, William Crashawe, Robert Foster, Thomas Stutting, Richard Bernard, Frances Isle, Robert Willson, George Wells, Peter Chesman, Richard Cockes and John Hall all of Epworth, Simon Wright, William Moody, John Moody and Robert Moody of Belton, Richard Tayler, William Goldsmith, Charles Kelsey, Robert Barrow, John Wells, Gregory Johnson, Thomas Travers, Samuel Maggott, Roger Philipson, Robert Dawson, Thomas Cooper, Henry Tayler, William Barker, Thomas Coggan and James Moody all of Faxey.

That the Tenants being thus Treated, repair severall times to Michaell Mouckton a Justice of the Peace, he refuseth to grant any Warrants, or pursue any Legall course for their preservation, but on the contrary gives severall Encouragements to the Riotors, and some of them being indicted at a Session for a notorious Riot, and found Guilty, it was Moved by some of the Justices, that they should be fined 4 or 5 Marks apiece, the said Mouckton moved openly that they should be fined but 6 pence, and it was carried, that it should be but 12 pence apiece.

That in February 1650. upon full hearing in the Exchequer, a Decree was made for establishing the Possession with the Petitioners, which was published upon the place in the presence of divers of the Inhabitants, who having now gotten the influence of Lilburn, Wildman and Noddell, declared that they would not give any Obedience thereunto, nor to any Order of the Exchequer or Parliament, and said they could make as good a Parliament themselves; some said it was a Parliament of clouts, and that if they sent any Forces, they would raise Forces to resist them, and proceed to the defacing of the Church, and within ten daies time the totall demolishing the whole Town of Samt, and other houses thereabout to the number of 82 habitations, besides Barns, Stables and other Outhouses, pull down

down and break in pieces a Windmill, and destroy all the Corn and Rapes on the 3400 Acres.

That the Damages by severall testimonies appear to be 80000^{lb} and upward.

That the Land being thus laid wast, the Church defaced, the Town with all the Houses, Mill and Outhouses depopulated, and Corn destroyed (*Lilburn, Wildman, Monckton, Noddell* Confederating) an agreement is made with severall men of the Mannor of *Epworth*, that in Consideration of 2000 Acres of the Land so laid wast to be given to *Lilburn* and *Wildman*, and 200 Acres to *Noddell*, they should defend them from all those Riots past, and to maintain in possession of all the rest of the 7400 Acres before laid wast, and keep them dry, and Deeds Sealed accordingly.

That then *Lilburn* and *Noddell*, *Jasper Margrave* and *George Stovin* of *Crowle* with others, come to *Santoft* Church on the Lords day, where the French Congregation of Protestants were gathered, and forced them from thence, and *Lilburn* told them they should not come thither unlesse stronger then they.

That then *Lilburn* and *Noddell* go to another Mannor called *Crowle*, and there they agree with some of that Mannor to assist them to get their Commons again, as *Epworth* had done, where they advise that they should Impound the Tenants Cattle, and if they Replevied, to Impound them again and break their Fences, and eat up their Crops, and so tire them out untill they attorned Tenants to them, which they did accordingly.

That the Tenants being thus terrified, and seeing their condition was to be like their Neighbours, they take Leases from *Jasper Margrave*, and *George Stovin*, who gave bonds to save them harmlesse, and so the Petitioners by the former force and this practise, were outed of their possession of both those Mannors.

That at the making of those Leases, *Noddell* declares openly in the presence of 20 persons, that he would lay 20 shillings with any man, that as soon as *Lilburn* came to *London*, there should be a new Parliament, *Lilburn* should be one, and call this Parliament to an account; further adding, that they had now finished this of *Lincolnshire* (meaning gotten the Land from the Petitioners) they would go into *Yorkshire* (meaning the rest of the Levell) and do the like there, and then they would give the Attorney Generall work enough to do.

That *Noddell* said at another time, that now they had drawn their Case, they would Print it, and nail it at the Parliament door, and if they would not do them Justice, they would come up, make an Outcry, and pull them out by the ears.

That when they had made the Agreement before mentioned for the 2200 Acres to be divided as aforesaid, then *Lilburn, Wildman* and *Noddell* cause to be measured, and take into their Possessions the proportions above mentioned, and agree with severall persons to Let proportions thereof, *Lilburn* repairs the house that was built for the Minister, and partly pull'd down by the Riotors, and puts his servants into it to keep the possession attained, and having forc't away the Minister and Congregation, imployes the Church to the use of a Stable, Cow-house and Slaughter-house, to lay hay and straw in.

That *Wildman* being present at the Examination of severall Witnesses produced by the Petitioners, who proved that *Wildman* was present when *Lilburn* made the bargain that they two in Consideration of 2000 Acres to them, and 200 to *Noddell*, of the Land so laid wast, should defend the Inhabitants from all Riots past and to come, and at their charge maintain them in the Possession of the remaining 5200 Acres, all but the Charge of a triall that was to be in *Michaelmas* Term following, and that he was present when the Deeds were Sealed to *Lilburn* and himself of the 2000 Acres, both which he denied with great Imprecations and invocations of Judgements to fall on him, if he were either Party or Privy, or was to have had any advantage thereby, till a Deed was produced, which being shewed him, he confessed to be his own Hand and Seal, in which he did Covenant as in that Deed is express.

The

The Inhabitants say in their Defence that the Lands before the Draining fed Cattle fit for the Butchers, but the Witnesses being crosse Interrogated say that it was overflowed with water in Summer before the Draining, and that in *May*, *June* and *July*, and all the Summer long they took Fish in severall places, unlesse in a very dry Summer, and that they went in Boats Swan-hopping in Summer.

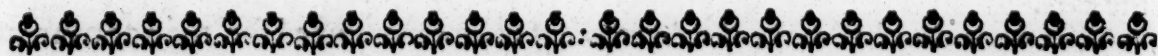
They also say that Snow Sewer was pulled up to defend the Isle from the coming of *Sr Ralph Hansby* then of the Kings party.

They also say that the Sasse was pulled up by the Command of one whom they knew not, but he told the Inhabitants that he was a Captain of *Sr John Meldrums*: *Noddel* in defence of his coming with 400 men to oppose the Sheriff, produceth witnesses, who Depose they heard one say *Mr Gibbon* sent to invite him to come, and in his Examination in the Exchequer, he saith he came to apprehend *Mr Gibbon* upon a Warrant.

Noddel also produceth witnesses, who say he hath been accounted well-affected to the Parliament.

But as to the Charges of Draining, the quiet possession of the Petitioners for ten years, the matter of Force and Riot, in destroying Corn, in opposing the Sheriff, and throwing down the Fences, pulling down the Houses and Windmill, and fetching away the Tenants Cattle by force, denying Replevins, depopulating the Town of *Santoft*, defacing the Church, forcing away the Minister and Congregation on the Lords day, the Contract of *Lilburn* and *Wildman* for 2000 Acres to them, and 200 to *Noddel*, the practise with the Tenants of the Mannor of *Crowle*, the language spoken against the Parliament, and the Dammage done to the Petitioners and their Tenants, no Defence is made.

The Parliament being Dissolved before this Report was made to them, upon Petition of the Participants, the Councill of State send for that Report, and made Reference thereof to a Committee of their own, and upon severall Examinations thereof, with the Depositions taken in the Cause, make Report again of what they finde, and then the Order following was made at the Councill of State, against which the Riotors Petitioning, it was again Referred to another Committee, and upon their Report, their Solicitor was committed for his indirect deportment in the same, and their Order following Signed.



THE O R D E R OF THE Councel of STATE.

THe Councel of State having heretofore upon the Petition of the Participants in the Draining of the Levell of Hatfield Chase in the Counties of York, Lincoln and Nottingham, preferred unto them the 14th of June last, relating unto a Report drawn up upon full hearing by a Committee of the late Parliament, concerning divers Riots and Outrages, and other unlawfull Actions committed within the Isle of Axholm, by the Inhabitants and Tenants of the Mannor of Epworth in the said County of Lincoln, and

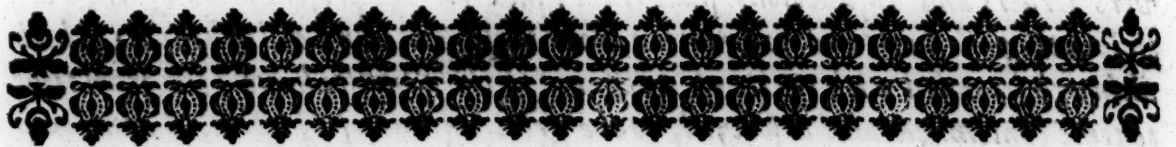
and Misterton in the County of Nottingham, against the Participants in the said Draynage and the Improvement thereof, did thereupon referre the said Report unto a select number of persons to be considered of, and they to report their Opinions concerning the same to the Councel, who having compared the said Reports with the Depositions of Witnesses examined on both sides before the said Committee of Parliament, and also again heard what could be alleadged on either side touching the said Report, have certified unto the Councel that they do finde the substance of the said Report warranted by the said Depositions, and nothing materially Objected by the said Inhabitants and Tenants against the same, and upon consideration of the whole matter, have certified their Opinions, that the 7400 Acres of Land in the said Report mentioned ought to be settled in the possession of the Participants, and the same quieted with them, and that a speciall Commission issue to try the Riotors, that as well the Offenders may be punished as the Sufferers repaired in a Legall way according to Justice, as by their said Certificate Registered together with the said Report amongst the Acts and Orders of the Councel more at large appeareth: Of all which the Councel having taken mature Consideration, and approving the said Certificats and the opinion therein delivered, and finding by the said Report that the said Participants have been by the Riotors tumultuary proceedings and evil practises of divers persons in the said Report particularly named, violently thrown out of the possession thereof, the Corn and Rapes there growing to a great value wholly destroyed, the Houses there built by them for habitation in a great number, and even the whole Town of Santoit ruined and demolished, and the Church defaced, the Saffes pulled up and all the said Improvements endeavoured to be again laid waite, and the Participants kept from their possession thereof by force, notwithstanding a Decree made in the Court of Exchequer upon the said Improvements, and divers Orders and Injunctions since there issued for the preservation of the Participants possession and prevention from those Riots and disturbances; which although seconded with Writs of Assistance to the Sheriffs have been from time to time contemned and disobeyed, to the great affront of Justice, dammage to the Commonwealth in generall, and the prejudice of the Interest of the State in the Feetarm Rent of 1228^{1b} by the year reserved out of the said Improved Lands, all which hath been of late promoted by the countenance and encouragement of Lieutenant Collonel John Lilburn, Major John Wildman, and one Daniell Noddell a Solicitor, which three by compact and agreement with divers of the said Inhabitants were to have and measured out to themselves 2200 Acres of the said Participants Lands for their reward in undertaking to defend the said Inhabitants from their Riots past, and to maintain them in possession of the rest of the said 7400 Acres against the said Participants for the time to come, as by the Report amongst other fowl miscarriages and misdemeanors committed and done by the said persons and divers others therein particularly mentioned appeareth. The Councel thereupon finding it necessary in this case, where the Decrees and Orders of the Courts of Justice have been with a high hand disobeyed and resisted, to the endangering of the Peace of the Commonwealth, through the opposition of turbulent and seditious spirits to apply the Military Power in Aid and Assistance of the Civil Government and Execution of Justice, Do hereby Order, Require and Authorize the Forces of the Army quartering in the said Levell of Hatfield Chase, or within the said Counties of York, Lincoln and Nottingham,

or any of them, or any others that are or shall be in those parts, to be aiding and assisting to the Officers of Justice and the said Participants in Draining of the said Levell, for settling, establishing and keeping the possession of the said 7400 Acres of the late Improved Lands within the Mannor of Epworth in the said Report mentioned with the said Participants, and also for Executing the Decrees and Orders of the said Court of Exchequer or any other Courts of Justice touching their possession therein, and for preventing such Riots and Outrages for the future, and in respect of the great Damage suffered by the Participants and their Tenants, it is further Ordered that the Commissioners of the Great Seal for the time being do Award a speciall Commission of Oyer and Terminer to the Judges of Assize for the said respective Counties to try the Riotors, and to punish them according to Law and Justice, and to enquire of the Damages suffered as aforesaid by the Participants and their Tenants, to the end they may have just Reparations for the same. Given at the Councell of State at Whitehall the 31 day of August 1653.

Signed in the Name, and by Order
of the Councel of State.

John Thurloe
Secretary.

Anth. Ashly Cooper.



Wednesday 31. August 1653.

At the Councel of State at Whitehall.

Ordered,

That the Report made to the Councel concerning the business of Hatfield Chace in Lincolnshire be humbly presented to the Parliament, and Collonel Thomlinson is desired to present the same accordingly.

To

To the Right Honourable the PARLIAMENT of
the Common-wealth of *England*,
Scotland, and *Ireland*.

The Humble Petition of above 60 Gentlemen Participants, Purchasers for valuable consideration of Lands in the Levell of Hatfield-Chase, in the Counties of York, Lincoln, and Nottingham, and above 200 of their Tenants, who have been despoiled of their Estates by the inhumane and barbarous Riots of the Inhabitants of the Mannor of Epworth.

Sheweth,

THat the late King being owner of the Mannor of *Hatfield* in the County of *Yerk*, in which he had a Chace of Red Deer, and of the Mannor of *Epworth* in the County of *Lincoln*, and of 15 other Mannors thereabouts, lying contiguous within the Counties of *York*, *Lincoln*, and *Nottingham*, adjacent to the said Chace, which had belonging to them the quantity of above 60000 Acres of Common waste Land so hurtfully surrounded that it yeilded little or no benefit to the Common-wealth, Did In the Year 1646. contract with Sir *Cornelius Wermuyden* to drain the same, which was done by him and his Participants at the expence of an 175046. as is proved by Examination of Witnesses upon Oath before the Committee of Parliament to whom it was referred, beside 1228^l per An. Fee-Farm Rent, reserved upon the Grants of those Lands, And Commissioners being sent to treat with the Commoners of the several Mannors, Agreements are made, and by consent confirmed by Decrees of the Court of Exchequer, and all rest quiet to this day, and well-pleased with the proportion allotted to them for their Common, being now kept dry for them at the Petitioners charge, except the Commoners of the Mannor of *Epworth* in *Lincolnshire*, and *Misterton cum Gringley* in *Nottinghamshire*, who lying contiguous, and taking advantage of the War, when the Petitioners had been 14 years in a quiet possession by the Grants before mentioned, and a Decree by consent of 370 of the Commoners within the Mannor of *Epworth*, who were all then that could be discovered to have right of Common, Did in *June* 1642. rise in Tumults, laid waste and destroyed all the Corn growing, and habitations planted in 4000 Acres, or thereabouts, so decreed to the owner of the Soil and Drainer within the said Mannor of *Epworth*, and keep it by force to this day, notwithstanding several Orders of the Parliament and Court of Exchequer; And committed both then and since many barbarous and inhumane Riots, in forcing open the Sluce, which vent the waters into the River of *Trent*, and let in the Spring-Tides, and thereby drowned 8000 Acres of the Tenants Corn and Rapes then growing, the Corn-stacks half-way deep, and all the habitations in the whole Levell, and so kept them by the space of ten weeks, and afterwards depopulate and demolish whole Town of *Santoft*, consisting of 82 Habitations, besides Barns and Stables, deface the Church, and at that time destroy all the Corn, Flax, and Rapes growing on 3400 Acres in *May* and *June*, and pulling down a Windmill: These and other damages are proved before the
said

said Committee to be above 8000^{lb}, for which the Parliament thought fit to except them in the generall Pardon, and Ordered a Committee to examine the Petitioners Complaint, who spent much time therein.

The Report of which Committee being prepared but not reported before the dissolution of that Parliament, the Council of State in *June* 1653. considering the consequences of such unparallel'd Insurrections in affront to the Courts of Justice, (who made severall Orders and Decrees for establishing the possession, and severall Writs of Assistance to the Sheriff who was several times beaten away) sent for the said Report, whereupon the said Rioters Petition against the same, upon which the Councell then Ordered a select number of themselves, and *M Scobell* to examine the said Report; who spent several daies in presence of both parties, to hear again what could be objected against the same; Upon whose Report the Council made an Order, that *Col. Tomlinson* then of the Council should present the Report to the Parliament, and another Order at that time is conceived for the Military power to assist the Civil Government, to establish the possession according to the severall Orders and Decrees with the Participants, and to enquire of the damages, to the end the Petitioners might have Reparation, as by that Order appeareth. Against which the Rioters Petition again, and procure the Order to be stopped, and thereupon another reference is made to another Committee of the then Councell, they likewise hear the Exceptions of the Rioters against the said Report and Order, and again re-examine the said Report with the Depositions taken in the Cause, and upon full hearing Report again to the Council; Whereupon the Order was signed, and the Solicitor committed for his abuse in the same.

Upon which Order of the Council for establishing the possession according to the severall Decrees in the Exchequer, your Petitioners did in *April* last endeavour to inclose the Land again, and set about 50 persons to work, to make up the Fences, upon notice whereof the Inhabitants of the said Mannor rise again, beat off the workmen, and wounded 14 of them, and so in affront both to all Decrees and Orders by force keep the possession till this day, to the great scandall of Justice, your Petitioners and all other discouragements to engage in such publique works so beneficial to the Common-wealth.

The Petitioners humble Suit is, That this Parliament will be pleased to give Order, that a Committee upon view of those severall proceedings before-mentioned prepare a Bill to passe into an Act for settling that whole Improvement which hath been drained at so vast an Expence, and to enforce the Delinquents to pay the Petitioners damages; In which Act such Immunities and Priviledges may be inserted as may encourage others to do the like publique works.

And they shall pray for your Honours, &c.

John Gibbon.

Edward Reed.

On the behalf of themselves, and the rest of the Participants and their Tenants.

F I N I S.